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ABSTRACT

The policies of the United Nations with regard to the six official languages have left holes in the fabric of international cooperation. Maintaining language services in all six languages has proved to be an impossibility because of the scarcity of trained interpreters and translators between, for instance, Chinese and Arabic. English, French, and Spanish are of necessity favored and are often used exclusively for various U.N. activities. Reliance on relay translation leaves many delegates at a disadvantage. Maintaining extensive language services is a strain on limited financial resources. Even full language services would not bring linguistic democracy to the United Nations: many delegates would still be hampered by the need to communicate in a language not in use, officially or culturally, in their country. Ironically, a single official language could prove more of a diplomatic force than pluralism, since delegates could count on being able to communicate in a spontaneous and unstructured manner with each other. However, it is not possible in the present day to impose any national language as the sole diplomatic lingua franca. Esperanto, as an established, easy-to-learn, international language with no attachment to any particluar nation or people, should be considered as the solution to the communication difficulties of representatives from the nations of the world. (JB)

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LANGUAGE EQUALITY

by Ralph Harry and Mark Mandel

FOREWORD

This study is based partly on a paper on "Language Barriers in the United Nations" which I presented to the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the International Studies Association at St. Louis, Missouri, in March, 1977. It has, however, been revised and updated, in particular to take into account the report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit of 11 October, 1977 (General Assembly Document A/32/237), and reactions to it. Mr. Mandel has done most of the research and recasting involved, but I agree completely with the implications to which he has directed attention.

I have myself reviewed carefully the suggested programme for introducing Esperanto at the United Nations, which is certainly the most controversial section of the paper. On 6 October, 1966 a petition was presented to the United Nations signed by almost a million persons, on behalf of organizations with a membership of nearly 73 million in 74 countries, requesting help in the dissemination of the ***International Language. The petition was referred by the Secretariat to UNESCO, which has given recognition to the achievements of*** *Esperanto, and made some use of the language in its work. While it is not to be expected that the UN will officialize Esperanto forthwith, it should certainly, in our view, make a serious study of the feasibility of using this neutral lingua franca of proven capacity for international communication to facilitate its work, reduce costs and eliminate language discrimination.*

Ralph Harry
Canberra, September, 1979

"To achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to ... language"

—*Charter of the United Nations, Art. 1 (3)*

INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR LANGUAGE AND THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGES

Any organization requires communication in order to coordinate and guide its operations. An organization whose structure or operations are of any complexity requires language, since the simpler systems of communication that suffice for requesting a drink or running a sawmill cannot carry complex meanings, or are originally established via the use of language. In an organization of many nations, the flexibility and power of *language* is an indispensable tool, but the multiplicity and diversity of *languages* is an impediment. Any international organization must overcome linguistic obstacles before it can coordinate itself linguistically. And at the United Nations, unlike a sawmill, communication is the very stuff of which the organization's work is made; yet the UN has to cope with all the diversity of the languages of most of the world's nations. How it manages that diversity, and the prospects for future management, are the subject of this study.

These observations, though they are largely couched in terms of the languages now in use at the UN, are not intended to be read as being specifically limited to the use of these particular languages. On the contrary, much of our exposition and analysis is applicable to the principle underlying the language policies here described and criticized: namely, that the only organizational solution to the problems of language diversity is translation and interpretation from every language into every other one. We shall first survey current UN language policy, with a brief look at its history and a consideration of its financial cost. Next we shall evaluate this policy in terms of practicality and discrimination. We shall then describe UN projections for the future development of language diversity, and the solutions

recommended by the UN's own Joint Inspection Unit, with a criticism of these recommendations. Finally we shall propose a practical solution based on a different and, we believe, more equitable underlying principle.

I. THE CURRENT LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations has six "official languages": Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. In theory these should all be coequal, with all services, speeches and documents accessible in all the languages with equal facility and at the same time. In practice, however, there is considerable inequity. The following sections describe the current policy of language service at the UN, the history of the situation, and its financial cost. Evaluation of this policy and its implementation will be chiefly left to the next chapter.[1]

1. PRESENT POLICY

It is obviously impracticable to use fifty or seventy-five languages together in the continuous regular business of an organization. Some restriction must be made. The rules of procedure of most of the organizations of the UN system[2] distinguish between "official" and "working" languages. The specifics differ from one organization to another, but in general they are a matter of practicality, e.g., interpretation is provided from and into the working languages.[3] In the General Assembly and its main committees the original distinction between official and working languages has been obliterated (see Chapter II), and all six official languages — Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish — are technically working languages. Arabic is not official or working in other General Assembly bodies or in the Security Council, but the other five are.

Other UN organs[4] provide more limited language services. Except for the Regional Economic Commissions, whose choices of languages are determined geolinguistically, all the major organs have the same set of five official languages as the Security Council, but fewer working languages.[5] All of them work in French and English, but most typically Spanish is the only other working language. (That was the pattern in the General Assembly from 1948 to 1968). Arabic, Chinese,

and Russian are not taken for granted as English and French are. Other asymmetries between the official languages, due not to policy but to implementation, will be described in Chapter II.

Regional meetings of UN bodies are served on a much scantier basis: interpretation in English, plus another official language or languages appropriate to the region, and translation in the interpreted languages plus French. UN publications are usually issued in English, French, and Spanish; other official languages are used when appropriate. The same pattern applies to correspondence.

Without going into detail, the same generalizations hold for other organizations in the UN system. English and French are primary, with English slightly more widely used, and some or all of the other four official UN languages follow, with Arabic and Chinese usually at the bottom. The two main exceptions are the Universal Postal Union and the International Labour Organization. The UPU recognizes only French as official, but publishes its documents also in Arabic, Spanish, and English, and interprets in French, Spanish, English, and Russian. The ILO uses German on a par with Russian. (See the end of the next section concerning UN use of German.)

A different field of language use is the internal operation of the staff of the various Secretariats. UN Secretariat staff may be assigned to a senior official partly on the basis of their skill in his native language, even if it is not official. Such issues are primarily of internal concern, but the production of documents for the members of the organization is of wider relevance. The dominant language for original documentation is English, with French a far second. Over ninety percent of documentation at UN Headquarters in New York is produced originally in English, and even in Geneva only twenty percent is in French (JIU, p.9). In UN-related agencies the situation is generally similar. In only four organizations does the proportion of original French drafting exceed ten percent, and only in the UPU does it exceed thirty. But whatever the original language, it all has to be translated.

Clearly, the UN still has a way to go in eliminating "distinction as to language" even in its own house.

2. HISTORY OF UN LANGUAGE POLICY

At the founding of the UN in 1945 the five texts of the Charter were declared to be equally authentic, and their five languages the official

languages of the United Nations: Chinese, French, English, Russian, and Spanish. French and English were to be the working languages. Presumably the practical difficulty of interpreting and translating everything into five languages motivated the distinction. But there was constant pressure to expand the service accorded to the non-working languages. Certainly the delegates from the eighteen Spanish-speaking Member States must have felt themselves at a disadvantage until Spanish was made a working language in 1948. Twenty years later Russian was also raised to working status. The resulting isolation of Chinese on the lower level, as the only non-working official language, was one cause of the final obliteration of the two-level system. In 1973 Chinese was raised to working status, and at the same time Arabic was recognized as an official and working language.

These changes did not take place in a political vacuum. The five languages of the Charter, the original official languages, included those of the five Permanent Members of the Security Council. China, the US and UK, the USSR, and France were powerful enough to be given the veto in the Security Council and powerful enough to command linguistic privilege as well. Spanish, the only official language not used by a Permanent Member, was the language of more UN Member States than any other. Yet, although its speakers outnumbered those of French on the order of three to one in the world, Spanish did not become a working language until 1948. Users of Portuguese outnumbered French two to one, yet it was not officialized, nor has it been.[6]

Clearly, population was not enough for a language to be given official status. Power and precedent were the main conditions. The power has been mentioned; the precedent lay in the League of Nations, which allowed for only English and French.[7] The League's precedent in turn may have been the 1919 Peace Conference, whose oral and written official business was conducted in those two languages. In the nineteenth century, international diplomatic conferences had normally used only French; presumably the status given to English in the League was due to the position of the UK and the US among the victors of World War I. The officialization of five languages in the UN of 1945 was a step in the direction of linguistic democratization; yet it was only a half-step, because the prior diplomatic languages retained their special privilege in the form of working-language status. French and English were the languages in which the Secretariat

conducted its daily business, as it still does to a great degree, and they are the languages for which interpreters and translators were most abundant; these facts are linked to the distribution of languages and power in the world. It is certainly true that the practical considerations of cost and time enforced a limit on the number of languages (time more then than now, because simultaneous interpretation had not yet supplanted consecutive interpretation). But it was ultimately power and precedent that determined the choice of English and French as *the* two languages.

Power was again important in the most recent changes in the UN's language policy, those of 1973. The upgrading of Chinese to a working language after 33 years as an official language came just two years after the UN's shift of recognition from the Republic of China (controlling Taiwan) to the People's Republic of China (controlling the Chinese mainland, including approximately one-fourth of the human race). And the simultaneous acceptance of Arabic as an official and working language of the General Assembly came two months after the start of the Arab embargo on petroleum exports to the United States.

The pressure to add further languages to the roll has not ceased. In the debate on the upgrading of Chinese the Mongolian representative, referring to arguments for Chinese based on its cultural richness and large number of speakers, pointed out that a number of other languages might also claim working status on the same bases. In the following year, 1974, the three German-speaking Member States (the two Germanies and Austria) requested official translation and publication of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Given the three States' willingness to cover the expenses, the General Assembly agreed. More recently, in 1976, an Indian representative complained about the non-recognition of Hindi, which he claimed is understood by three times as many people as Arabic. He spoke in Hindi, with English translation by a member of his delegation. That year eleven delegates, including representatives of three Portuguese-speaking countries, made statements in a non-Assembly language. In 1977 the number had risen to fourteen. Six representatives of Portuguese-speaking countries used their own language in the General Debate and foreshadowed a bid to seek its recognition in the Assembly.

3. COST OF THE CURRENT LANGUAGE SITUATION

Language services at United Nations Headquarters in New York are estimated to have cost twenty-seven million dollars in 1976, or 7.5% of the regular budget. The Geneva office, with about half the language staff spent two-thirds as much, 6.4%, of their budget.[8] While the other agencies' estimates of their language expenses cannot be compared directly because of different definitions and accounting procedures, they show a clear tendency for smaller agencies to spend a larger proportion of their budget on language services than large ones do.[9] The UN system's total expenditure on language services in 1976 was probably substantially in excess of one hundred million dollars. It must also be remembered that language staff and services produce indirect costs as well: overhead for the offices and their furniture, office machines, production and dissemination of documents, installation and upkeep of interpreters' booths and microphone-earphone systems, and so on. Personnel-related costs are inevitably high, in view of the large number of people involved: e.g., the permanent language staff of the UN Secretariat is one of the largest vocational groups there, amounting to nearly one-quarter of the entire Professional staff.[10]

A prime reason for the expense of language services is the "multiplier effect" of each new language. The addition of a language or languages to a translation or interpretation program involves not one or two new language service capabilities, but two to connect the new language with *each* of the languages already in use. The four working languages of the UN in 1972 required twelve combinations, one from each language into each of the others. The addition of Chinese and Arabic, in theory, would have required the addition of eighteen new combinations: each direction between Chinese and each of the four old languages, the same for Arabic, Chinese-Arabic, and Arabic-Chinese. (In fact, most of these combinations are not available — see Chapter II — and so the actual costs have been less than for full service.)

II. EVALUATION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

The service provided for English, French, Spanish, and Russian

includes direct interpretation of any speech made in one language into each of the others. But there is an acute shortage of qualified language staff for Chinese and Arabic, which is one reason for the less general availability of service in these languages.[11] In fact, virtually the only combinations that exist for these two languages are with English or French. French-Arabic and Chinese-English interpreters and translators can be found, but there are few qualified Russian-Arabic language personnel in the world, or Chinese-Spanish, or Arabic-Chinese, at least available for recruitment by the UN.[12] Service for Arabic or Chinese therefore passes through either French or English, usually the latter. This "relaying" system, though necessary in the present context, has several undesirable effects. It delays service by doubling the normal ten or fifteen-second interpretation lag for the languages affected; and the interpretation thus delivered may be of poorer quality than a direct one would have been. No translation can ever convey perfectly all the denotative and connotative content of the original, even with such revision and editing procedures as are used at the UN. The chance of unintentional confusion or misdirection is far greater in simultaneous interpretation, where there is very little time to consider alternative renderings and none at all for review or correction, except occasionally by a watchful delegation checking the interpreter. The relaying procedure, especially in interpretation, multiplies these dangers. As in the party game of "Telephone", in which each player in turn whispers the message to the next person, misunderstandings and errors can pile up on each other. But loss or distortion of information is not a joke in international conferences. In point of fact, most of the UN-system secretariat condemn relay interpretation as not up to the standards that have been developed for direct interpretation. This defect is felt to be especially acute at meetings where much technical vocabulary is employed and precise meanings of words are essential, in particular during discussion of resolutions and treaty texts. The complaint is not universal in the UN family of organizations, but it has been reported that "at scientific meetings, the loss of information through 'relay' is at least 50 percent." (JIU, p.37).[13]

The scarcity of skilled Arabic- and Chinese-language personnel produces another sort of difficulty in the process of providing language services. A person is normally considered competent to translate or interpret only into the language (or rarely languages) that he is used to

speaking or writing and in which he possesses complete fluency: generally his mother tongue. In fact, he must have an extraordinary vocabulary, beyond that of most educated speakers, for a professional translator or interpreter must have some familiarity with just about anything that may appear in his (spoken or written) source, including the technical terms, turns of phrase, and semantic subtleties of many fields of knowledge. A UN-system translator or interpreter is normally expected to be able to work into this "active" language from at least two "passive" languages, which he understands perfectly but in which he does not possess comparable productive skills. But because of their scarcity, Arabic- and Chinese-language personnel have to be pressed into service in the reverse direction from that for which they were hired and in which their primary skills lie. For instance, a native Chinese-speaker, qualified to interpret French and English into Chinese, may be called upon to interpret Chinese into English. Unless he is exceptionally gifted he will tend to produce more errors and misunderstandings than a comparably qualified native English-speaker who is interpreting into his mother tongue. If this less-reliable English version is then used as the basis for relayed interpretations into other languages, its weaknesses will be magnified in those versions.[14]

In order to avoid the hazards that simultaneous interpretation presents even at its best, a growing number of speakers provide written texts of their speeches in advance of presentation. The interpreters and the producers of records of meetings are strongly in favor of this practice. An interpreter can work on a translation at comparative leisure, with time to solve any unusual difficulties that may appear. At speech time, even if he has made no notes, he is on familiar ground. Some delegations have also taken to supplying English translations for the use of the press. As long as a delegate follows the text, interpretation is smoother and translation is faster. But any departure from the script poses difficulties for the language staff, who must decide whether to continue to use the advance version or to interpret more literally the spontaneous spoken version delivered in session.

Reliance on a staff of language specialists creates problems of its own. Even with the addition of temporary personnel during peak demand periods, the language service staffs are severely strained by the uncoordinated demands of different organizations and their committees, working groups, and other subdivisions. And even when

program planning is initially so coordinated that demand for language services will not exceed available staff at any time, conference schedules are often upset by the cancellation of some meetings and by the unscheduled addition of others, often as a result of the formation of new organs, (e.g., a special committee). The addition of meetings causes obvious difficulties, increasing the need for interpreters at the time of the meeting (JIU, p.39). Either more temporary staff must be hired, or else the staff on hand must be worked harder or spread thinner, risking a deterioration in quality either way. Cancellations are also expensive, since any temporary staff engaged for the cancelled meeting must still be paid. The job of arranging language services is not eased by such uncertainties.

The problem of scheduling is particularly acute in the New York and Geneva offices of the UN. First of all, the overall demand for language services is far greater there than in the other organizations of the UN system.[15] Then there is the number of different units that call for language services. Many groups scheduling many meetings create more schedule pileups and conflicts than a few groups holding a few meetings. Furthermore, the organs operating out of New York and Geneva arrange many out-of-schedule meetings, sometimes in the form of major special conferences held away from headquarters, incurring extra expenditures for transportation and per-diem allowances.

The use of temporary staff brings its own costs into the picture. Each temporary employee must have a contract and all the administrative paraphernalia that goes with it: accounting, payroll, and so on. And free-lance interpreters and translators command higher rates of pay than their permanent UN counterparts. The difference can be considerable. The free-lance interpreters who provided Arabic service in the UN during the year starting from the beginning of the thirtieth session (which included six special conferences) cost $640 000, twelve percent more than permanent staff providing the same service would have cost.

2. INEQUITIES OF THE SYSTEM

If sufficient adequately-skilled language personnel were on hand to meet all demands, the UN's implementation of its language policy might achieve the stated goal of equal treatment for all six official languages. But the world is imperfect, providers of language services

are in short supply, and some or all of the consumers must suffer. We have referred to the double delay entailed by the relay procedure in interpretation, and to the poorer quality of work that results from the use of relays and the need for language personnel to work in the "wrong" direction. Here we will elaborate on the often unequal distribution of these impediments to communication.

By and large, the English-language delegates can expect to be spared any delays in interpretation. (The French-speakers may have comparable service). If, for example, the Jordanian representative makes a point, his words will be directly interpreted into English and the English-language delegations will hear them before anyone else except the Arabic-speakers.[16] Anyone who must listen in Russian, Chinese, or Spanish must be patient for some ten or fifteen seconds more while 'his' interpreter absorbs the English version and produces his own interpretation. If now the Costa Rican and Liberian representatives both wish to reply, the latter will have the advantage of those seconds in which to assimilate the Jordanian's statement or formulate his own. He will also have had a better chance to connect the speaker's gestures and facial expressions with the content of his words. During the respective replies, the Jordanian will get the short end of the stick: though the Liberian's message will reach all the non-English-speakers at about the same time, the Arabic (and the Chinese) will be ten or fifteen seconds behind everyone else in hearing the Costa Rican. Impaired communication hurts speakers, too, and the Jordanian and Costa Rican both lose a little, compared with the Liberian, when part of their audience loses out through delay. Each of these discriminatory delays is accompanied by the additional burden of the risks of relay translation, viz. multiplied error and misunderstanding. And of course, "wrong way" interpretation affects only communications to or from Arabic or Chinese; English-Spanish and Spanish-English interpreters are not in short supply.

Oddly enough, the need for relay translations of written material to and from Arabic and Chinese does not produce such inequities. As stated above documentation usually originates in English and is translated directly into all other languages being used. But a document submitted in Arabic or Chinese requires relaying; and instead of there being discrimination, everybody suffers. The principle of equal treatment for all official languages cannot be enforced in simultaneous interpretation, but *all* written materials are normally withheld from

distribution until all the versions are ready. Often a debate cannot begin until the basic document or draft resolution is available in all languages. Even when individual delegates are personally willing to work with a text in another language than their own — e.g., a delegate who is fluent in French as well as his native Arabic[17] — they are often required by their governments to insist on absolute equality in the Secretariat for the sake of national prestige. This sometimes causes serious waste of time.

Even perfect service in six languages would fall far short of serving all the 151 Member States. Eighty-seven of these, which include 68% of the members' total population, have at least one official language that is an official language of the UN. The remaining sixty-three states (37% of population) are officially not linguistically represented. Several of them use their own language in the General Debate, providing their own interpretation into an official language, as is permitted by the rules of procedure. Samoa, where English and Samoan are both official, has used Samoan. An Indian delegate, as mentioned, has used Hindi when language itself was the issue. Many of the Arab delegations have used English or French, presumably to avoid the unequal burden of delay and risk of error that the personnel shortage places on Arabic.

Many of the "non-represented" states debate in a language bequeathed to them by a former colonizer: French for Congo, English for Sri Lanka. Even when official in the nation, such languages are not always common mother tongues among the people, but are reserved to the educated or to an even more limited intelligentsia. In some cases, such as India, the former colonial language is the only one available for nationwide administrative use, as well as for foreign relations. Delegates from such countries often feel that the enforced use of their former masters' language is an affront to their national pride. So, though only sixty-two states are unable to debate directly in their own official language, there are many more whose representatives must deal in a language which is not native to them, even though their countries have officialized it perforce.

This inequity is aggravated in meetings on specialized topics. If a country's best — or only! — meteorologist, mineralogist, or agronomist does not happen to speak the language of an international conference in his field, his nation will have less than optimal representation or none at all. Even if he reads the language well enough to

understand and write technical papers, that skill is still not sufficient for the delicate negotiations with political implications frequent in intergovernmental meetings.

The UN's service of formal translation and interpretation as a part of conference services often fails to overcome language barriers at informal meetings outside the official conference room even though the real negotiation is taking place there. An illustration can be drawn from the Law of the Sea Conference.[18] Interest groups of smaller constituency than the Conference as a whole, e.g., the "coastal" states and the "land-locked" states often wished to meet informally, without the public openness, stiffness, and limitations of a formally scheduled meeting. The membership of such groups cuts across geographical and linguistic lines, so that several languages would be represented in a single group. But almost by definition, such off-the-cuff meetings do not allow for formal interpretation. If the members wished to meet informally they had to be willing to waive language equality. The regional groups of The General Assembly now often require interpretation for their meetings,[19] and have in consequence ceased to be forums of direct communication.

Yet, because of the multiplicity of official languages UN delegates have no compelling incentive to increase their capacity for direct and informal negotiation by mastering other languages. There are so many! And the meetings and documentation are (generally) available in one's own official language of choice, via interpretation and translation. Even in the language of the host city, where they must live for the duration of their tour of duty, many delegates never get beyond the linguistic necessities of daily living and social contact. The precision and range necessary to discuss UN matters productively remain beyond them.

A comparison with the League of Nations is instructive. That body's official use of only French and English resulted in what may be called a different distribution of inequity. Certainly the native French-speaker was more comfortable in Geneva, as the native English-speaker is today in New York. Delegates from French- or English-speaking countries had the advantage in debate and negotiation. Yet the use of only two official languages yielded an unexpected benefit to career diplomats stationed in Geneva. Since all of them had to be proficient in at least one of the two official languages, there was a good chance that Delegate X and Delegate Y could discuss their

countries' common interests privately in the corridors and salons, no matter what languages they spoke at home. There is, in this respect, a certain advantage to the enforced use of only one or two languages, though the modern concept of linguistic democracy makes the choice of any one or two national languages unacceptable to many of the excluded nations. This apparent paradox will be referred to again below, when we discuss alternatives to the difficult and deteriorating present situation.

III. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

1. PRESSURES FOR EXPANSION

There is no reason to expect that the UN's use of languages will remain permanently fixed at six official and working languages. The trend of expansion has been slow but irreversible. From French unchallenged in the nineteenth century to French second among equals in the late twentieth, the linguistic practice of international diplomacy has been ever more pluralistic. The pressures that have made it this way have not ceased; if anything, they may be on the increase.

The languages of colonialism have survived among the former colonies as a matter of utility, so long as the education necessary to run a country is available only in those languages. But some countries wish to develop the capacities of their own languages and to phase out the relics of foreign domination. Consider, for example, the "nativization" of the names of countries, of which the conversion of Dahomey to Benin and the Ellice Islands to Tuvalu are recent examples. Changes like this may be viewed as more symbolic than substantive, but significant planning and development of native languages is a real and important phenomenon. In one interesting case, Malaysia and Indonesia have been unifying and regularizing their two languages in a continuing program of regional language planning and policy.

Formerly, colonial relationship allowed many of today's Third World leaders to be educated in metropolitan universities. That link to the homelands of the European languages is now broken or weakened. As recently independent countries nativize their educational systems away from imperial and other external languages and expand and develop them to include a full range of academic and technical subject

matter at university and technical-school levels, there will be less need for their young people to be educated at foreign schools or in foreign languages. And as that need lessens, fewer and fewer of those young people will divert their valuable learning time into the painful mastery of an alien language, usually much more different from their own than Russian is from English. Few of the potential leaders of the coming generations will have their predecessors' fluency in the European languages of the UN. The influence of Arabic and Chinese may grow in their geographical spheres, but many of the diplomats of 2030 may prefer to speak — may insist on speaking! — Swahili, Tagalog or Malay-Indonesian, not to mention Portuguese, Japanese, Hindi-Urdu, or Bengali.

We have already mentioned some of the arguments that have been given in support of the recognition of additional languages and the enlargement of services provided for languages already in use. The number of people and nations that use a language has been a common basis of argument. Supporters of Chinese and Arabic have also mentioned literary, artistic, and scientific heritage and the long cultural tradition associated with each language.[20] Chinese was called no less informative and rich than the other working languages and was praised for its beauty and usefulness. Its speakers were numbered at one-fourth of the world's population; one delegate argued that it would be only fair to accord working-language status to Chinese in view of its share of mankind, even though they are concentrated in one part of the world. The nineteen Arab states made analogous cultural references in proposing their language, and were able to augment their population ("over 120 million") by "the millions who are using it as a language of their religion."[21] They also referred to its status as a working language in UNESCO (which has been a "front-runner" in the recognition of additional languages) and other specialized agencies.

It was argued that Arabic, being already a working language in several specialized agencies, was therefore better entitled to become a working language at the UN. This is one type of example of the tendency of language service to expand. Once a language has been given some form of limited or localized service, it seems to have a better claim to more and wider service, ending only at full parity with the other languages used by the organization. In this case the expansion occurred among organizations of the UN system; the upgrading of Spanish, Russian, and Chinese within the UN itself are

cases of expansion within a single organization, a deepening of a service rather than a horizontal spread to other units. There is general agreement throughout the UN system that language services tend to "snowball". The Spanish service of one organization[22] has expanded from a quite small scale on introduction in 1971 to full working status scheduled for 1979. Some organizations consider the tendency to be controllable, but experience to date suggests that when power pushes, control will yield (Chapter II).

When the three German-speaking Member States requested translation of several classes of documents, they argued that "the scope and intensity of their participation and cooperation would be enhanced and enlarged if essential United Nations documents were available in their own language."[23] The same argument had previously appeared in the debates about Chinese and Arabic. It is certainly valid. In fact, it is a valid argument for any state at all, from populous, industrial, literate Japan to tiny, underdeveloped, ill-educated Djibouti. There is no clear limit in view on demands for additional languages. The ones hypothesized above as candidates for the UN of 2030 each have a present base of over twenty million people, and at least the potential for considerable regional or world political power in the next fifty years. Metals and minerals are as essential as oil to our technological world. Who can say that Malay-Indonesian will not acquire the clout that Arabic has now?

2. FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTING EXPANSION

The costs of expanding language services can be illustrated from the history of Arabic and Chinese at the UN. In both these expansions an acute shortage of qualified personnel made it impossible to reach the original goals. In 1973 the Secretary-General estimated that providing full service to Chinese would necessitate enlarging the Chinese Section and other units at UN Headquarters by a total of 84 permanent staff positions (41 in the Professional category and 43 in General Service), supplemented by 16 temporary staff for peak demand periods such as sessions of the General Assembly. The net cost of these additions for the 1974-75 budgetary biennium was calculated at approximately 2.7 million dollars, including the physical services of printing, reproduction, and distribution. The personnel shortage, both in language skills and in the reporting skills necessary for transcribing and summarizing debate, forced the planners to recommend that the avail-

able staff concentrate on the most important classes of material, namely, verbatim records of plenary meetings of the General Assembly, meetings of the First Committee,[24] and meetings of the Security Council. This would halve the estimated workload, additional staff needs, and cost: from 18,000 to 8,000 pages annually, from 84+16 to 39 regular +8 temporary staff, and from 2.7 to 1.2 million dollars biennially.[25] (The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions reduced the latter figure to 1.05 million.) The accounts do not allow a direct comparison of the estimates with the actual expenditures, but the expansion of Chinese-language staff appears to be in line with the predictions.

Chinese services had only to be expanded; Arabic had to be built from the ground up. In a report on Arabic corresponding to the one on Chinese just referred to, the Secretary-General estimated the cost of the new services at double that of the desired expansion of Chinese services, approximately 5.6 million dollars for 1974-75 (vs. 2.7 million dollars for Chinese, had the entire expansion been possible). The actual expenditure for Arabic in the biennium proved to be somewhat less, about 4.8 million dollars. "Alterations to conference rooms, etc." account for one-fourth of this sum, about $1,295,000. The simultaneous interpretation system requires a soundproof interpreters' booth for each output language. Buried wiring links each booth to the microphones at the rostrum and at delegation desks. More wiring carries the interpreters' voices to earphones at all seats, including chairs for non-participants and visitors, where each listener can select the speaker's voice or the interpretation into any of the languages. The alterations consisted of a sixth booth in each room to be modified and the addition of another channel to the entire listening system. The library of Conference Services also had to be built up.

The scarcity of qualified translators and interpreters for Arabic and Chinese is not local or illusory, and the Secretariat can hardly be accused of not looking hard enough. In 1974, shortly after the vote to officialize Arabic, the UN advertised for translators in seventeen Arab countries and five major Western cities.[26] Three thousand applicants appeared. Ninety-nine percent of them were either unavailable or unacceptable: this campaign got the UN fewer than thirty translators. A second recruiting drive two years later was more successful, though only proportionally: of eight hundred applicants, the Board of Examiners recommended only twelve, or 1.5 percent. It should be noted that

the UN has, as it must, extraordinarily high standards of translation. Even the successful candidates found it difficult to maintain them, adding to the burden of the Arabic revisers, who are comparably hard to find at the requisite level of competence. The situation becomes worse when the General Assembly is in session and the demand for Arabic translation increases up to twentyfold. The requirements of the General Assembly itself are augmented by reports of subsidiary bodies, which must be translated into Arabic, and by the demand for summary records of General Assembly meetings to be made available while the Assembly is still in session. Of course this seasonal high demand had been expected, but even the addition of temporary translators proved inadequate to prevent delays and backlogs.

The state of interpretation in Arabic is hardly better. Since it is provided only during the General Assembly, the Secretariat had decided to rely on free-lance interpreters hired just for that period. But there proved to be an acute shortage of interpreters who could work either into Arabic or from Arabic into other languages as fast and as accurately as the job required. And the demand for service further strained the supply when the General Assembly decided that special conferences (such as Law of the Sea) should also have Arabic interpretation. The cost of these services provided by free-lance interpreters has already been mentioned: $640,000, compared to an estimated $572,000 for the same services if provided by full-time staff. (JIU, p.17).

The Chinese delegate revived a rather curious claim in the course of demanding full status for his country's language. Reaching back to the debate on the elevation of Russian to working-language status, he quoted two Resolutions[27] as declaring that the "use of several languages by the United Nations could constitute not a hindrance but rather an enrichment[28] and a means of attaining the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.." Insofar as any state's communication is improved by its ability to participate in debate and documentation in its own language, and insofar as that improvement furthers the goals of the Charter, there is indeed some overall enrichment. But there is no clear point at which to stop applying that argument. The obstacles produced by multi-directional language services, which we have described in some detail, are quite sufficient to call into question the net advantage of such enrichment. At the least, the current means used to achieve it deserve fundamental consideration.

IV. THE UN'S PROPOSALS FOR COPING WITH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

This chapter summarizes the Joint Inspection Unit's chapter "Conclusions and Recommendations" and raises some criticisms of its contents. The introductory paragraph of that chapter, quoted here in full, clearly states the assumptions that underlie their recommendations:

> "In the absence of a generally recognized world language, language services, i.e. interpretation of oral statements made at meetings and translation of documents and publications, are a necessary part of the operation of the United Nations system. To the extent that they facilitate international discussion and understanding, they can be said to contribute to economic and social development; but they are very expensive, and each additional language adds disproportionately to their cost. They should not be allowed to divert an undue proportion of the limited resources available for development."

The inspectors note that purely technical considerations place no limit on the number of languages used, but that in practice, as the number of languages increases, the cost and difficulty of language services come to outweigh the benefits. The problems already described all contribute: salaries, working and storage space, office and printing equipment, administrative and personnel expenses, and delays. (We would add to the list inequities and personal strain, which we have discussed and which are implicit in the Inspectors' findings.) Each of these is subject to the multiplier effect as the number of languages in use increases.

One available option is to limit language services to certain major types of meetings and documents, or to correspondence with states concerned. In some organizations of the UN system this has been successfully arranged by negotiation between the organization and the Member States. The World Health Organization, for instance, estimated the cost of adding full service for Chinese and Arabic at 2.5 million dollars each, at a time when WHO was trying to cut administrative costs so as to use their resources for technical cooperation in developing countries. By agreement with the nations concerned, they restricted interpretation to meetings of the World Health Assembly and Executive Board, and translation to a highly selective choice of documents, based on technical interest to the Government concerned. This approach reduced actual translation expenditure to approximately

$700,000 for Arabic and $330,000 for Chinese (JIU, p.45). The Inspectors emphasize this means of keeping down cost and trouble, but we are not confident that emerging languages will always be persuaded to settle for part measures in the UN itself.

The Inspectors also recommend seeking out possible economies in the current language services: reducing documentation selectively; replacing temporary language staff with permanent employees; simplifying working methods, e.g. by eliminating revision of some or all translations; expanding cooperation and resource-sharing between UN-system organizations; procuring more assistance, both financial and operational, from the Governments concerned with a particular language; and taking advantage of any applicable technological developments. Certain of these avenues appear promising, but we do not share the Inspectors' rather strained optimism that the UN will be able to manage all its present and future language problems in the ways described. At the most, three of these proposals seem to us as promising as the Inspectors think they are: shifting from temporary to permanent staff, obtaining aid from Governments, and using facsimile and telex transmission to allow central translation of documents for conferences away from Headquarters or cooperatively among different agencies and offices. All the other approaches are uncertain, though for different reasons. And they are all proposed within the framework outlined in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, a framework whose built-in weaknesses they can do nothing to ameliorate.

Reducing documentation by class of material is practicable and promising. But any proposal to reduce documentation differentially for different languages threatens to confront the same feelings of national pride and power that have led to the past expansions of language services. Any diminution of present services will meet with some opposition, but a diminution which even seems discriminatory will raise hackles and have a very poor chance of acceptance.

Simplifications of working methods sounds promising. The Inspectors questioned the Secretariats of the UN-system bodies about simplification in one specific way, namely reduction of the number of revisers and editors. Revision and editing of translations is generally held to be necessary, not only to ensure accuracy, but also to keep translations into different languages consistent with one another. The UN has at present one reviser for every two translators and approximately one editor per 5.6 translators (vs. ratios of 1:2 and 1:3.5 in

the system as a whole). The World Meteorological Organization has dispensed with revisers entirely, an economy which they admit has caused quality to suffer. The Inspectors recommend limiting revision to the most important classes of documents, "although any substantial savings could probably be made only at the price of a lowering of the high standards to which Member States are accustomed." (JIU, p.49).

The agencies of the system currently cooperate on language service in several ways. Lending of staff is for the most part small-scale and ad hoc. The UN Office at Geneva runs the Inter-Agency Interpreter Training Program. Inter-Agency meetings are occasionally convened to discuss such topics as better coordination of terminology work, a uniform costing system for meetings and documentation, and central printing facilities for publications (not internal documents); terminology and costing are progressing, but no organization is willing to commit itself financially to a central printing operation, in spite of the considerable savings that would result. And the Chinese language personnel recruited by UN Headquarters in consultation with the Chinese Permanent Mission are also available to other UN-system organizations. But the Inspectors' proposals for further cooperation — pooled staff, regular staff exchange, joint training, and centralized printing — met with unanimous rejection. Each agency feels that it best knows its own needs for terminology and training, so that the first three proposals would not be helpful; and they also fear that a central staff pool would subject them to greater uncertainty resulting from conflicting conference schedules. The agencies had already decided against their own printing proposal. The Inspectors hope for better coordination of scheduling in the future, but we see no reason to expect it.

In fact, no really significant improvement at all is possible within the system as now constituted. The comparative linguistic democratization realized by the advance from one or two languages to six remains a democratization among the most powerful. To be sure, many small Member States make native, elite, or official use of one of the official languages — Barbados speaks English, Rwanda uses French — but true linguistic democracy is in some ways further off than it was in 1945. Even at a liberal estimate, forty percent of the Member States, thirty percent of the United Nations' population, are still denied the use of their own languages. And even among the languages in use there remain inequities of service.

Adding languages is not the answer. Let us suppose the officialization of German (three States), Portuguese (seven), and Japanese (one).[29] The linguistically non-represented portion of the UN membership would fall to thirty percent of the States and twenty percent of the population, but at an enormous cost in money, labour, and difficulty. The law of diminishing returns will already be in operation, as perhaps it is now, but to the States so benefited and other States waiting their chance the advantages of officialization will seem great indeed. And if Japanese is officialized (one State, 110 million people), why not Malay-Indonesian (two and 140 million)? We have shown above that though expansion is ever more costly and cumbersome, there is no logical place to stop it, and that future shifts in world power may well expand the current system by language after language, expanding cost and difficulty at every step if it continues on its present principles.

V. AN ALTERNATIVE

1. THE PARADOXICAL BENEFITS OF OFFICIAL MONOLINGUALISM

A diplomat's life was much simpler in nineteenth-century Europe, linguistically speaking. If he wanted to function at all, he would use French, and that was that. Each person had to make the effort to learn the language, except those who were born to it, but the rewards were great: no delays for translation or consecutive interpretation, no language staffs to manage and distribute, no parallel expenditure on multiple versions of every document, and no difficulties with private negotiations. Of course the French had a considerable advantage, but everyone accepted their language. And, perhaps more important, that was just the way things were: Italian for musicians, French for diplomats.

No one seriously suggests a return to that world. Nations are jealous of their rights, and now that linguistic non-discrimination has been recognized as a right, they are firm in rejecting linguistic hegemony. French, or any other national language, is too closely associated with its nation's culture and policies to be generally accepted as the single common language of a world political organization such as the UN. The principle of linguistic non-discrimination incorporates this political fact into the UN's Charter and rules. But the advantages of a

one-language system are too attractive to forget about altogether. The Inspectors recognized this fact: "*In the absence of a generally recognized world language*, language services ... are a necessary part of the operation of the United Nations system." (Emphasis added.) Is there any way to simplify the multiplicity of languages without elevating one nation or group above the others?

A politically neutral language seems clearly the answer. But even "unaligned" countries may be politically unacceptable, for reasons such as the division between industrial and developing nations, or regional jealousies. And even if some acceptable, politically innocuous language were to be found — say Sranan Tongo (Surinam) or Sinhalese (Sri Lanka) — its vocabulary might need extensive augmentation in order to become suitable to the needs of modern technology and diplomacy. Latin, which preceded French as the international language — of scholarship — has something of a modern vocabulary, thanks to its constant use as a source of scientific terminology and its continuing official use by the Vatican. But its identification with the Roman Catholic Church probably makes it, for much of the world, as politically loaded as English or Russian. On one occasion when the Vatican addressed the Greek Government in Latin the reply was sent in classical Greek! In any case there would still be the problem of learning the language.

2. A VIABLE CHOICE FOR A SINGLE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

There is, however, a politically neutral language which is not associated with any nation, people, region, or religion, whose vocabulary meets the needs of contemporary usage (including the UN), and which is easier to learn than any national language. The International Language Esperanto is currently in use in all parts of the world, by people of the most varied linguistic backgrounds, for business, correspondence, travel, religion, advertising, literature, the physical and social sciences, and daily life. Model texts already exist of a number of basic and important UN documents such as the Charter, the Declaration of Human Rights, and the Resolution of the General Assembly on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and on the Seabed and Ocean Floor, and the Conventions on the Law of Treaties and on Diplomatic Relations. Its simple and regular structure makes it extremely easy to learn, rewarding the learner with an

enormous degree of expressive power for a relatively small investment of effort. Its regular patterns of stress and word structure make the spoken language clear and easy to comprehend, and its phonetic spelling makes literacy almost automatic.

Esperanto has several specific features that simultaneously enrich and simplify it. This seeming contradiction can be demonstrated by an example: the adjective *bela*, meaning 'beautiful'. The final *a* indicates that the word is an adjective, since all adjectives end in *a*, as all nouns do in *o* and all verbs in *i*. One can modify the meaning of an Esperanto word by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root (*bel-*). The diminutive suffix *-et-* changes *bela* to *beleta* 'pretty''; the augmentative *-eg-* produces *belega* 'stunning, extremely beautiful'. The 'opposite' prefix *mal-* yields *malbela* 'ugly'. Combined with the suffixes mentioned, it yields *malbeleta* 'not very good-looking' and *malbelega* 'surpassingly ugly'. Other parts of speech can also be made. Since *-o* is the ending for nouns, *belo* means 'beauty'; we shall not run through the translation of *malbelo*, *belego*, etc. The suffix *-ul-* is used to form a noun referring to a person: *belulo* 'handsome man, good-looking person'; with the feminine -in-, *belulino* 'beautiful woman' (plus *malbelegulo*, etc.). Final *-e* makes adverbs: *Belege*! 'Beautifully done! A magnificent job!' The causative suffix *-ig-*, with the verbal ending *-i*, produces *beligi* 'to beautify'; *malbeligo* is the Mock Turtle's 'uglification'. Here are fifteen words, plus many others not given, derived from a single root by means of a few affixes and endings which can be applied to any root in the language. Because of such productive processes the English-Esperanto section of a current popular dictionary[30] contains 19,500 entries while the equivalent Esperanto-English section contains only 9000.

Conjugation is also extremely simple: the present tense of all verbs, in all persons, singular and plural, is formed with the ending *-as*; the past with *-is*, the future with *-os*. Whoever remembers, as a foreign-language student, memorizing Spanish conjugations or English strong and irregular verbs is certain to appreciate such regularity.

The language is not, however, "mechanical" or "mathematical" in feeling. Shakespeare, Goethe, Baudelaire, Cervantes, Lermontov, Tagore, Mori Rintero, Dante, Mao, Camões, the Bible, and the Koran have all been movingly translated into Esperanto. There are hundreds of original works in Esperanto and many families where it is the normal language of conversation and the mother tongue of the children.

The annual congresses of the Universal Esperanto Association, as well as many smaller gatherings, regularly demonstrate Esperanto's workability in international conferences. The 1977 Congress was held in Reykjavik and concentrated on the problem of "Freedom of Communication". Mr. A. M. M'Bow, the Director-General of UNESCO, said of the opening session that it was his first experience of an international conference where language was not a barrier but an aid to understanding.

3. A PROGRAM FOR INTRODUCING ESPERANTO AT THE UN

Like any innovation, Esperanto at the UN would meet with opposition.[31] But the alternative is to commit more and more money, time, and energy to a program of language services which at its best is still horribly expensive, beset with difficulties, and intrinsically unfair. The generalization of the metric system shows that people can adapt for the sake of universal comprehension; it would be possible with Esperanto, once it has been given general recognition. Such recognition requires, however, the establishment of a practical program and timetable.

We would like to propose for investigation and discussion an outline for the gradual introduction of Esperanto into the UN over a five-year period:

First year: Establishment of a unit in the Secretariat to control the basic UN terminology in Esperanto, publish definitive texts of the Charter and other basic documents, and train interpreters from the six Assembly languages into Esperanto.

Second year: Arrange basic instruction for staff members of Permanent Missions and Secretariat to acquire a passive knowledge of Esperanto. Preparation of terminologies in principal fields, drawing where possible on the Esperanto terminologies already developed. Training of interpreters from an additional six languages (say Portuguese, German, Japanese, Bengali, Hindi, and Malay-Indonesian).

Third year: Provide interpretation into Esperanto from the twelve languages, but with the General Assembly languages still in use as at present. Provide General Assembly documentation in Esperanto, along with the six.

Fourth year: Production of documents at UN expense only in the original language and in Esperanto. Other translations to be at the expense of the countries concerned. Interpretation into Esperanto

only; other languages at expense of countries concerned.
Fifth year: UN invites other organizations to adopt the same practice. Recommends to Governments that Esperanto be taught to all newly-recruited diplomatic officers. Delegates able to speak in their own language, UN providing interpretation into Esperanto from the twelve languages and possibly more. Speeches in Esperanto to be encouraged.

The additional costs of this program would be of the order of one or two million dollars for each of the first two years, rising to about three million dollars in the third year during which Esperanto services would be in addition to the existing ones. After that costs would fall off sharply as translation and interpretation into the current General Assembly languages were phased out. Interpreters already trained in General Assembly languages could develop the requisite Esperanto skills in a very short time.

The most important gains would not appear at all on the schedules and balance sheets. Linguistic equality at the UN would finally be a fact, and its success there might impel other groups to consider taking the same route. Diplomats gaining skill in Esperanto (much more quickly than in any national language) would find new possibilities available to them as language barriers fell away from casual conversation. One can envisage the Icelandic and Cape Verdean delegates coming together on the basic of their common interest in the sea, and going on to discuss island economies. Proficiency in the host language would still be as necessary as it is now for Secretariat and Permanent Mission staff, who would be long-term residents in the host city. In meetings they would speak that language or Esperanto, or another interpreted language if that were more convenient, and in correspondence and informal conversations they would use Esperanto if they did not have another common language.

Whether such a program were put into effect over five years or spread over a longer period, the advantages would be immeasurably great for the United Nations and for everyone who stands to profit by the UN's gain, which is to say all of humanity. It is not to be expected that the Member States will agree to officialize Esperanto forthwith. But there are solid reasons for examining this option. We suggest that the UN make a start by commissioning at once a thorough study of the capacities of modern Esperanto and the modalities for bringing it into use. The incidental and ultimate benefits of its introduction are clear. Let us move to an organization without language discrimination.

NOTES

[1]Most of the data used in this study are drawn from General Assembly Document A/32/237 of 11 October 1977: *The Implications of Additional Languages in the United Nations System*, a report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), prepared by C. E. King with the assistance of A. S. Bryntsev and E. D. Sohm (dated July 1977). We would like to acknowledge our extensive use of this document, without which the current study would have been much different in form and content. We shall not normally cite the source of our data, but it is usually the JIU report.

[2]The UN system includes the United Nations itself, with offices in New York and Geneva, and a number of autonomous specialized agencies which cooperate with it. Each of these bodies, including the UN, has subsidiary organs, whose language policy is often different from that of the parent body.

[3]"Interpretation" refers to the oral translation of spoken material. At the UN it usually refers to simultaneous (as opposed to consecutive) interpretation, in which the audience listens to the interpreter through earphones during the speech itself. "Translation", in the UN context, is restricted to the translation of written material.

[4]This term refers to specialized units of the UN itself, such as the Trusteeship Council and the Industrial Development Board.

[5]The Trade and Development Board has all six as official.

[6]Except in the Economic Commission for Latin America, where it is official but not working.

[7]A delegate might use another language, but he had to provide an English or French version at his own expense. The General Assembly has a similar rule.

[8]The disproportion of two-thirds to one-half is largely due to the unfavourable Swiss rate of exchange for the U.S. dollar.

[9]But it is noteworthy that UPU, one of the smallest agencies, nevertheless reported only $650,000 expense for language services in 1976, 10.0% of its budget, a ratio comparable to those of agencies with ten times its overall budget. This is largely attributable to the UPU's restrictive language policy, according to which only French is official and service to other languages is limited.

[10]In 1976 UN Headquarters in New York employed 102 interpreters, 249 translators, 117 revisers, and 44 editors: 512 persons to overcome language barriers. They were supported by 316 typists, stenographers, and calligraphers, plus 254 supervisary, clerical, and printing personnel, for a total of 1,082 regular language personnel. Additional temporary staff accounted for 46,450 man-days.

[11]The JIU feels, and we concur, that the shortage will gradually ease as Arabic becomes more widely used and the pool of translators and interpreters becomes larger. The same may happen with Chinese. Of course, there will then be pressure to fill these language services out, which will drastically increase their cost.

[12]That is, although they may exist somewhere (e.g. in the employ of an interested government), there are none available for employment by the UN.

[13]Another problem peculiar to technical translation and interpretation arises from the continuous change and evolution of the science or technology involved, which results in a constant development of terminology. These developments are not always parallel in different languages, and oblige the technical language worker to be constantly extending and cross-checking his vocabularies. The United Nations language service is forced to maintain extensive card indexes and data banks and issues hundreds of bulletins.

[14]And to imagine the worst case, think of the Arabic version of this speech being produced by a native English-speaker who is also interpreting in the "wrong" direction!

[15]UN and UNOG list, for 1976, 1,082 and 585 regular language staff posts, respectively, while the twelve other organizations reporting figures average 143, with a range from 16 at UPU to 304 at WHO. The year's reported or expected temporary staff man-days were: UN 46,450, UNOG 25,750, others averaging 9,400 (range: UPU 800, UNESCO 36,900).
[16]And, of course, any other individuals confident of their comprehension of spoken English.
[17]This example is hypothetical, as are all others used.
[18]Ambassador Harry was a delegate to this conference.
[19]Most of the regional groups use English plus one or two other languages. The Eastern European Socialist states use Russian, without interpretation.
[20]Most of the supporters of Chinese referred only to equalization of its status with that of the other official languages, but some score of speakers brought up the arguments summarized here.
[21]There are approximately 540 million Moslems in the world (according to the 1977 Book of the Year of the Encyclopaedia Britannica). No matter what assumptions are made about their distribution, there are somewhere over 400 million Moslems in non-Arab countries, all of whom revere the Arabic language and have at least some acquaintance with it.
[22]Apparently the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, though the JIU report is not explicit.
[23]Document A/9705.
[24]The first Committee originally debated all "political" questions. When its work increased it was supplemented by the "Special" Political Committee. In recent years the First Committee has devoted most of its time to Disarmament and the recent Special Session decided to confine its work to that subject.
[25]The JIU report gives the figures as 2.7 million biennially, reduced to 1.2 million annually. This appears to be a textual error.
[26]New York, Geneva, London, Paris, and Vienna.
[27]2359B and 2479.
[28]Presumably of participation in the UN, and perhaps also of its cultural atmosphere.
[29]Austria, German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany; Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tome and Principe; Japan.
[30]J. C. Wells: *Concise Esperanto and English Dictionary*. (London: English Universities Press, 1969).
[31]Esperanto is already present, though not officially, in the form of a club of Esperanto-speakers among UN personnel in New York.

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